

# Douglas-Cherokee Economic Authority, Inc. Head Start/Early Head Start

## Policy Council Meeting Minutes

Thursday, October 5, 2023 | 10:00 a.m. | Meeting

**Meeting called to order by** Kristie Woolard  
**Type of meeting** PC Monthly Meeting  
**Chairperson** Clent Dunn  
**Note taker** Ginny Ritchea  
**Called to order** 10:04 a.m.

### Attendees

**Vice Chairperson:** Angel Gibson  
**Secretary:** Amanda Dotson  
**Treasurer:** Chasity Gibson  
**Total Members Present:** 14  
**Quorum Met:** Yes

## AGENDA TOPICS

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### 1. Welcome/Call to Order | Presenters: *Kristie Woolard, Parent Involvement Manager*

**Presentation:** Kristie called the meeting to order. Angel Gibson temporarily filled in for her as the Chair until Clent Dunn arrived.

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### 2. Mindful Moments | Presenter: *Kristie Woolard, Parent Involvement Manager*

**Presentation:** Kristie explained that just like the butterfly fan that was given out; there is a breathing exercise that mimics a butterfly's movement. Kristie demonstrated starting with hands together, inhaling as you move your hands out and away. Then you can exhale as you bring your arms back in. Kristie instructed to do this three times, to help us to stay mindful of our body and explained that we talk about Mindful Moments at our Policy Council meetings and in our Active Parenting classes.

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### 3. Literacy Reading | Presenter: *Tessie Crawford, Curriculum & Assessment Manager*

**Presentation:** Tessie began by explaining that she chooses books for both Head Start and Early Head Start, looking for books that parallel our curriculum. Licensing requires that a percentage of our books have realistic pictures, and when the staff is reading the stories with the children, they point out features, introducing new vocabulary words, such as spine, covers, author, title, and illustrator. As Tessie read "Because of an Acorn" by Adam Schaffer, she mentioned that it is good for children to look for features as they read, mentioning the colors noticed in tree trunks, reinforcing vocabulary words.

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### 4. DCEA Program Spotlight | Presenter: *Judith Butler, Educational Opportunity Center (EOC)*

**Presentation:** Judith Butler from Education Opportunity Center (EOC) gave fliers and pens to all Policy Council Members. Judith gave an overview of the EOC program, explaining that they serve more than 1000 students per year. They provide counseling and assistance with financial aid for high school students and above. Their focus is low income and first generation students. In the past year, the youngest individual they served was a 17-year-old High School Senior, up to a 73-year-old community member. It is their goal to work collectively as one agency and community. The EOC serves seven counties and sometimes the best assistance is helping them to access other resources, such as food and housing, until education is the priority.

**Discussion:** There were questions about where to find offices (available in each county). Judith explained that they could help provide the resources available in the counties they serve, even if the individual lives in a different county.

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### 5. New Policy Council Members | Presenter: *Kristie Woolard, Parent Involvement Manager*

**Presentation:** Kristie announced that there was a change since information was uploaded; Kelly Tugman was elected for Blount County. Also, a member for Hamblen County will not be able to attend because of her job. Kristie asked for Policy Council approval to allow Kelly Tugman to become a member.

**Motion by:** Jolean Lewis, Sevier Co.  
**No Discussion.**

**Seconded by:** Amanda Dotson, Grainger  
**All in favor, motion carried.**

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**6. Policy Council Training | Presenter:** *Curt Amos, Director*

**Presentation:** Curt explained that the full presentation was available on the website. Our Policy Council members are part of our Head Start governance, and the key message was that relationship building is the heart of leadership. Our program has different components, but the goal is to build relationships with children and families, to get them ready for kindergarten. Curt gave history of the program, mentioning it started in 1965, and then was reauthorized in 2007. This reauthorization developed the Performance Standards, which are the regulations that we follow now; the Performance Standards include Policy Council. Curt emphasized that we cannot operate Head Start without Policy Council; it is part of the law and we strive to support active parent engagement.

Curt explained that the written plans are how we meet the performance standards. We ask that Policy Council members are involved and engaged in the Self-Assessment process. More information will be provided about the Self-Assessment later. The Self-Assessment is conducted to see how our program is doing, and then the data is used to revise the written plan if needed.

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**7. Approval of Minutes September 2023 | Presenter:** *Kristie Woolard, Parent Involvement Manager*

**Presentation:** The minutes from September 2023 are online in the Board and Policy Council section of our website ([www.dceaheadstart.org](http://www.dceaheadstart.org)). There were no questions or concerns regarding the minutes. Kristie called for a motion to approve the September 2023 Policy Council minutes.

**Motion by:** Amanda Dotson, Grainger Co.  
**No Discussion.**

**Seconded by:** Jolean Lewis, Sevier Co.  
**All in favor, motion carried.**

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**8. Personnel Report | Presenter:** *Amanda Dotson, Secretary*

**Presentation:** The Personnel Committee met, approved, and ratified all hiring decisions. Clent called for a second.

**Seconded by:** Krista Warner, Sevier Co.  
**No Discussion.**

**All in favor, motion carried.**

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**9. Budget Report | Presenter:** *Chasity Gibson, Treasurer*

**Presentation:** The finance committee met, but did not have a quorum. A motion was called to approve the budget.

**Motion by:** Brandon Akins, Blount Co.  
**No Discussion.**

**Seconded by:** Jolean Lewis, Sevier Co.  
**All in favor, motion carried.**

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**10. Old Business | Presenter:** *Clent Dunn, Chairperson*

**Presentation:** None

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**11. New Business | Presenter:** *Curt Amos, Director and Lindsey Arnold, Health and Nutrition Manager, Tessie Crawford, Curriculum and Assessment Manager*

**Presentation:**

**Eligibility Training | Presenter:** *Curt Amos, Director*

Curt reviewed the eligibility requirements for a child to be accepted into the Head Start program, reviewing that they must be three years old for Head Start. A Pregnant Mommy may apply for the Early Head Start program. He reviewed that an infant starts in the program at 6 weeks old, and we work hard to transition a child into the Head Start program at 36 months. You can be categorically eligible, through McKinney Vento, public assistance, foster or kinship, or a recipient of SNAP, SSI, and TANIF. To verify income, it is best to use tax return. At least 90% of our enrolled children must be "income eligible" and there are also guidelines on including children with disabilities.

**Screening Process/Health/Nutrition | Presenter:** *Lindsey Arnold, Health & Nutrition Manager*

Lindsey explained that children must be up to date on immunizations to start in a Head Start classroom, and must provide a physical. We understand it is difficult to get a dental appointment right now, but it is a performance standard. We participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Through this program, we are reimbursed for food costs. There are very strict guidelines, which is why our menus and

recipes have specific foods. We must stay within sugar limits and purchase cereals based on nutritional facts. The Office of Head Start requires that children get a specific percentage of their daily nutrition while at Head Start. We also expose children to foods they may not be familiar with eating.

**Facilities Update | Presenter:** *Curt Amos, Director*

Most of our facilities are in good shape. Curt encouraged our council members to let us know if they ever have a concern with a facility. There have been questions about the classroom setup. The arrangement of furniture is a big deal and while there may be ideas we can consider, most of it is set. The Blount County facility is coming along well, and we will work to post pictures to the website soon.

**Social Emotional Learning Video | Presenter:** *Tessie Crawford, Curriculum & Assessment Manager*  
Tessie shared a video of Molly Wright, the youngest person to do a Ted Talk- discussing the importance of connection and the First Five Years. We do not think about the importance of connections in everyday life; however, we have memories of games, nursery rhymes, and riddles. We want our next generation to have those memories too.

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**12. Director's Report | Presenter:** *Curt Amos, Director*

**Presentation:** Curt explained that while the report was posted to the program website, they are being provided with the items that were left off the report. The website will be updated. We have a CLASS Monitoring review coming up, which deals with the teacher/child interactions in the classroom. Evaluators will be visiting the week of October 30- November 3. They will be monitoring 31 classrooms. The review is approximately 20-minute observations that will focus on the teacher/child interactions they observe. Curt explained that this review is very stressful for our staff, and we will not know which classrooms they will be visiting yet. We also have the Focus Area 2 review this program year. The reviewers will also go out to the centers to look at the facilities in terms of health and safety. A 45-day notice will be sent out to indicate when the Focus Area 2 review will take place however, the Office of Head Start can also show up unannounced. Curt also explained that the board has already approved our need to do a "carryover budget", moving money from last year.

**Discussion:** A brief discussion about CLASS review and employee wellness too place.

**Motion by:** Krista Warner, Sevier Co.  
**No Discussion.**

**Seconded by:** Angel Gibson, Sevier Co.  
**All in favor, motion carried.**

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**13. Active Parenting 1<sup>st</sup> Five Years | Presenter:** *Kristie Woolard, Parent Involvement Manager*

**Presentation:** Kristie shared the parenting curriculum we use to support our families. All counties have started the sessions. There are a total of four sessions in the curriculum. They include 1. Ages and Stages of Children, 2. Preventing Problems, Discipline, and Transition, 3. Encouraging Positive Behavior, Power of Encouragement, and Caring for the Caregiver, and 4. Preparing the Child for School Success. Families are encouraged to participate all sessions.

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**14. County Reports | Presenter:** *Kristie Woolard, Parent Involvement Manager*

**Presentation:** Kristie presented the county reports, explaining that county reports are updates on what is currently going on at the centers in each county. This could include studies they're working on right now, and classroom happenings. There should also be information sent out this month about our Male Involvement activity. Male involvement is a Performance Standard from the Office of Head Start.

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**15. Inkind/MVP Award | Presenter:** *Kristie Woolard, Parent Involvement Manager*

**Presentation:** Kristie awarded the classrooms with the most In-Kind hours for the month of August. A discussion about In-Kind Pro occurred.

**Blount:** Fairview

**Cocke:** Northwest

**Grainger:** Bean Station

**Hamblen:** North Hamblen/EHS 2

**Jefferson:** Cherokee

**Monroe:** Madisonville

**Sevier:** Douglas Dam

**Union:** Cross Creek

**Motion by:** Angel Gibson, Sevier Co.  
**No Discussion.**

**Seconded by:** Chasity Gibson, Hamblen Co.  
**All in favor, motion carried.**

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**16. Adjournment | Presenter:** *Kristie Woolard, Parent Involvement Manager*

**Presentation:** Kristie thanked everyone for participating and asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. A door prize was given away.

**Motion by:** Angel Gibson, Sevier Co  
**No Discussion.**

**Seconded by:** Jolean Lewis, Sevier Co.  
**All in favor, motion carried.**

**Meeting Adjourned: 12:56 PM**

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**Information Provided Online Prior to Meeting**

- October Meeting Agenda
- Policy Council Minutes – September 2023
- List of Policy Council Members
- List of Policy Council Committee Members
- Personnel Activity Report
- Budget Report
- Vendor Activity Report
- InKind Report
- Parent Involvement Fund Report
- Board and Policy Council Report
- Program Governance

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Secretary

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Date

**Special Session  
September 14, 2022**

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Policy Council had a special session to get the approval to submit a supplemental grant application to purchase replacement vehicles.

**Motion by:** Krista Warner, Sevier Co.  
**No Discussion.**

**Seconded by:** Amber Atkins, Monroe Co.  
**All in favor, motion carried.**

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